AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** An implantable device for delivering a therapeutic agent into a vessel, the device comprising:

a stent having a plurality of circumferential rings each having a plurality of upper peaks and lower peaks, the lower peaks of one circumferential ring being coupled to the upper peaks of an adjacent circumferential ring, each circumferential ring comprising a separate tubular member, each tubular member having a plugged proximal end connected to a plugged distal end to form the circumferential ring, a ~~having~~ longitudinal hollow core section extending along a longitudinal axis of the tubular member from the plugged proximal end to the plugged distal end, and a multiplicity of pores providing fluid communication between the hollow core section and the external environment; and

a therapeutic agent contained in the hollow core section of each tubular member, wherein the therapeutic agent is configured to be eluted from the ~~one or more~~ hollow core sections into the vessel through the multiplicity of pores after implantation of the stent within the vessel.

2. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 1 wherein the core sections extend within at least a portion of each circumferential ring.

3. **(Canceled).**

4. **(Canceled).**

5. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 1 wherein the multiplicity of pores are spaced apart at variable distances with respect to one another.

6. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 1 wherein the multiplicity of pores are disposed circumferentially about an exterior surface of the tubular member.

7. **(Original)** The device of claim 1 wherein the multiplicity of pores vary in size with respect to one another.

8. **(Original)** The device of claim 1 wherein the multiplicity of pores vary in shape with respect to one another

9-14. **(Canceled).**

15. **(Currently Amended)** A method for manufacturing a stent for use in a vessel, the method comprising:

forming a first tubular member having a longitudinal hollow core section extending along a longitudinal axis of the first tubular member into a first circumferential ring having a plurality of upper and lower peaks, the first tubular member including a plugged first proximal end connected to a plugged first distal end to form the first circumferential ring;

forming a second tubular member having a longitudinal hollow core section extending along a longitudinal axis of the second tubular member into a second circumferential ring having a plurality of upper and lower peaks, the second tubular member being separate from the first tubular member, the second tubular member including a plugged second proximal end connected to a plugged second distal end to form the first circumferential ring;

forming a multiplicity of pores in a lateral surface of each tubular member, the multiplicity of pores providing fluid communication between the hollow core sections of each tubular member and the external environment;

forming a stent from the first circumferential ring and the second circumferential ring by coupling the lower peaks of the first circumferential ring to the upper peaks of the second circumferential ring; and

loading a therapeutic agent into the one or more hollow core sections of the tubular members,

wherein the therapeutic agent is formulated to be retained within the one or more hollow core sections during delivery of the stent and thereafter eluted within the vessel.

16. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15 wherein the therapeutic agent is inserted into a proximal opening of the tubular member, the proximal opening being in fluid communication with the hollow core sections.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15 wherein the tubular members are formed from a shape-memory alloy.

18.-20. **(Canceled).**

21. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15 wherein the multiplicity of pores are disposed circumferentially about an exterior surface of each circumferential ring.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15 wherein the multiplicity of pores are disposed at variable distances with respect to one another.

23. **(Currently Amended)** A method for delivering a therapeutic agent into a vessel, the method comprising:

providing a stent formed from a plurality of circumferential rings, each circumferential ring having a plurality of upper peaks and lower peaks, with each circumferential ring having a separate tubular member, each tubular member having a plugged, closed proximal end connected to a plugged, closed distal end to form the circumferential ring, ~~having~~ a longitudinal hollow core section extending along a longitudinal axis of the tubular member from the plugged proximal end to the plugged distal end with a therapeutic agent dispersed within a bioabsorbable polymer disposed therein, and a multiplicity of pores providing fluid communication between the hollow core section and the external environment;

implanting the stent within the vessel; and

eluting the therapeutic agent from the hollow core sections of the plurality of circumferential rings into the vessel through the multiplicity of pores by biodegradation of the bioabsorbable polymer, the bioabsorbable polymer mediating elution of the therapeutic agent over an extended period of time.

24. **(Canceled).**

25. **(Canceled).**

26. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 1, wherein a first circumferential ring of the plurality of circumferential rings contains a first therapeutic agent and a second circumferential ring of the plurality of circumferential rings contains a second therapeutic agent.

27. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 26, wherein the first circumferential ring and the second circumferential ring are coupled together in sequence to form at least a portion of the stent.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 1, wherein the stent is balloon expandable.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 1, wherein the therapeutic agent is dispersed within a bioabsorbable polymer configured to mediate the delivery of the therapeutic agent over an extended period of time.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15, further comprising forming a third tubular member having a longitudinal hollow core section into a third circumferential ring having a plurality of upper peaks and lower peaks.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 15, wherein the therapeutic agent is dispersed within a bioabsorbable polymer.

32. **(Previously Presented)** The device of claim 30, further comprising coupling the third circumferential ring to the first circumferential ring and/or second circumferential ring.